

STATE PENITENTIARY.

VERY FAVORABLE SHOWING FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JUST CLOSED.

The Net Receipts Largely Surpass Those of the Previous Year—Reports of the Board of Directors and of the Sept.

Governor O'Ferrall has just received the annual report of the Board of Directors, Superintendent and Surgeon of the Penitentiary. It is an interesting document which speaks well for the general management of the institution and shows that the net receipts during the past fiscal year amounted to \$54,184.34. The report also points out the great need of additional cell accommodations, a new kitchen, new hospital and a new laundry.

REPORT OF THE BOARD.

The report of the Board of Directors is as follows:

Commonwealth of Virginia,
Office Board of Directors, Virginia Penitentiary,
To His Excellency, Charles T. O'Ferrall,
Governor of Virginia.

We transmit herewith the annual report of the Superintendent and the Surgeon of the Penitentiary, with the accompanying tables.

The net gain of the year's operations at the Penitentiary is \$54,184.34, and after deducting the balance to the credit of the fund, there remains a net balance of profit for the year of \$54,184.34.

This is not only the largest profit ever yielded by this Penitentiary, but we know of no other prison in this country that makes so good a financial showing. These figures are the result of a very successful year. The State has entered into contracts with contractors (who do all their work within the walls and under the eyes of our own officers), and the most painstaking economy in purchasing the supplies of the institution. We think our system for the management of convicts far more humane and vastly more beneficial to the State than any other our State has ever tried, or that we know to be in operation in other prisons of this country.

Our tabulated statements show that the farm has been operated during the fiscal year at an apparent loss of \$4,591.11. But it should be remembered that in accordance with the purpose for which the farm was purchased, we have sent there three hundred men for whom we have no work here. Not many more than half of these prisoners are able-bodied men and a large number of the rest are either habitues of the hospital, or have to be kept upon hospital diet all the time. Had these three hundred men, sick and well, been retained in the Penitentiary (where we had no work for them), their maintenance here would have cost us \$56 per capita per annum, whereas, at the farm they have cost us above their earnings only \$15 per capita per annum. This saving of itself justifies the State's investment in the farm. But this is not all the farm has done for the State. It has also been a place of instruction for our convicts, and a place of instruction for the people of the State.

THE FARM A BENEFIT.

It must, therefore, be a great benefit to the State, to have a farm as beneficial to our convicts as the farm is to the State. We have seen that the farm is a place of instruction for our convicts, and a place of instruction for the people of the State. It is a place of instruction for our convicts, and a place of instruction for the people of the State. It is a place of instruction for our convicts, and a place of instruction for the people of the State.

MAINTENANCE.

The cost of maintenance for the fiscal year was \$4,444.12, making a cost per capita of \$6.12, which is the cost of feeding, clothing, and other necessities. While it would seem to be low, it is the result of a careful and economical management. Many of our supplies, including every ounce of meat, large quantities of vegetables, etc., have been brought from the farm. It is a place of instruction for our convicts, and a place of instruction for the people of the State.

CONTRACTS.

The contract with the Tobacco Company, which was made on the 29th of October of this year, has been renewed. The contractors expressed no desire to renew and I with the advice and consent of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and with the approval of the Board of Directors, have entered into a contract with the Davis Boot and Shoe Company, a corporation duly chartered under our laws, which contract provides that the said company shall from the 24th of October 1897, and thereafter during the entire term of the contract, supply the State of Virginia, which expires May 1st, 1898, employ and pay for with certain exceptions, 100 male convicts in addition to the 700 males and all the females now employed. We are now in the process of procuring the necessary equipment for the shoe factory, and we are also in the process of procuring the necessary equipment for the shoe factory.

VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.

A number of States have adopted the parole or conditional pardon system, and it is said to be working well. We are satisfied that this system, as it comes when Virginia, too, will be profitable. It is a system of parole or conditional pardon, and it is said to be working well. We are satisfied that this system, as it comes when Virginia, too, will be profitable. It is a system of parole or conditional pardon, and it is said to be working well.

THE FARM.

Working convicts upon a farm in the cultivation of the soil is a system which could not only be profitable, but it would be a source of profit. The scheme was urged for the relief of a congested prison and to find some sort of employment for those who could not be used upon contract work within the prison walls, and more especially as a place for the incurable and those with infectious diseases, looking upon it as a sanitarium. I have from time to time during the fiscal year sent from here 180 prisoners in the winter to the farm, and there many of them sick and disabled. The large number of them who were able to work have been kept employed as far as was possible. Of course it will be understood that with the amount of land which the State owns the whole number could not always be profitably employed, so with the advice of your honorable board and the consent of His Excellency the Governor, I leased the adjoining lands of D. W. Tucker & Co. We cultivated 292 acres in corn and tobacco for which we pay a share rent of one-third of the crop.

This large number of prisoners have been kept at the expense of the farm, a strict account of everything furnished including the pay of the officers and guards has been kept against the farm. Statement No. 1, to which I refer you will show that as a result the farm has not been able to meet the expense by \$4,591.11.

We are gradually bringing up the land to a high state of cultivation which will perhaps stimulate others. Its productiveness is proved by the fact that we have made this year with the excellent management of Mr. Craven, a crop, which all things considered is very satisfactory. Some of the crops are: 4,000 bushels of corn, 22,000 pounds of tobacco, 1,125 bushels of wheat, 1,124 bushels of rye and over 2,500 bushels of oats, 800 bushels of peas and large quantities of cabbage, potatoes, turnips, tomatoes, etc. etc.

What was thought by some to be a doubtful experiment has proved to be a success and solved the difficult question of what to do with a certain class of prisoners. The State needs in my opinion, more SUGAR BEETS.

We have planted this season, for experimental purposes, two (2) acres in sugar beets, one (1) acre on the low lands and (1) acre on the uplands, and notwithstanding the dry season of 11 1/4 tons and the high land about 10 tons to the acre, which has shown by the analysis made by Dr. Froehling to contain 17 per cent. of saccharine matter, of 90 per cent. purity, which will compare very favorably with the productions in countries where the cultivation is made a specialty. If satisfactory arrangements could be made (and I have reason to believe they could) that a plant could be established for their manufacture into sugar, I would recommend that authority be asked to purchase 4,000 or 5,000 acres of suitable land, and that the convicts be used in planting and cultivating not less than 1,500 or 2,000 acres annually in sugar beets. The crop would be quite suitable, in many respects, requiring as they do a great deal of hand labor, and their growth of such a character that prisoners could be easily guarded. It would seem to me that the State could very properly enter into an enterprise which seems to promise not only such favorable returns, but the establishment of an industry that would increase the production of revenue to the State.

EMPLOYMENT OF PRISONERS. The experience of all institutions of this kind has shown that it becomes a necessity to the convict to give him employment. Work is the relief of the mind and body.

Upon this point the New York State Superintendent of Prisons, has truly said: "No prison manager anywhere has had the fertility of resource which enabled him to maintain a body of prisoners in idleness, and at the same time keep them from deterioration which culminates too often in insanity or death. Whoever asserts that idleness is possible in prison without all this train of inevitable evils, contradicts the plain and uniform teaching of experience. The prison must be made to work for the good of the laborer should be productive and in the interest of the State, that he may be as far as possible help to pay the expense of his trial and conviction."

This should be done strictly upon business lines, keeping always in sight, however, the improvements of the convict's condition. I have therefore endeavored to keep all able-bodied persons employed under careful and humane regulations, as will appear from the fact, that during the fiscal year, the convicts have made for themselves after performing the task fixed by the superintendent, over work, when it was needed by the company, in one month \$2,125, and in the twelve months of the fiscal year \$14,225.95, as shown in statement No. 2.

The work at the farm is necessarily light on account of the large number employed there.

DISCIPLINE. It must be borne in mind that an institution of this kind where there are nearly 1,700 persons confined, nearly all of whom are men, and many of them desperate and vicious, a strict discipline must be enforced. It has been my endeavor to do this in a firm but kind manner.

The laws of the State very properly allow large discretion to the Superintendent. I have used this authority with the greatest care possible, each case is tried and tried upon its own merits. The punishment is not to be too severe for the crime, but it is to be such as to make the convict feel that the law is the law, and that it is to be enforced.

Notwithstanding the crowded condition of our cells, no serious trouble has occurred during the year. The discipline of the farm has been well maintained. A small mutiny occurred in the early spring with a squad of prisoners at the tobacco plant beds, across the river. Some twenty-five persons were engaged in weeding the plants in charge of three guards. It being a Sunday, the prisoners were not allowed to work. One of the prisoners, named Riddick, Christmas, approached a guard to make a request, when near enough squirted tobacco juice in the guard's eyes and seized his gun. In the struggle of the guard to retain his gun he was thrown to the ground, and the prisoner, who was armed with a knife, started to run, was fired upon by the guards, two loads took effect on Christmas, bringing him down and wounding him. Blood poison set in and he died a mortal wound. One prisoner, named James Miller, was also engaged in the same mutiny. He was also wounded and died a mortal wound. The prompt action of the guards firing upon the escaping convicts (which I commended them for) had a wholesome effect and there has been no further insubordination.

Our experience very clearly demonstrates that it is practical to work prisoners on the farm.

REFORM. The chief object in view should be the reformation of the prisoner, so that at the conclusion of his term of sentence he may go back to the community a wiser and a better man, if that can be effected, but at any rate warned that he cannot indulge in crime without incurring punishment. The prisoner who is reformed is a benefit to the community, and the prisoner who is not reformed is a burden to the State.

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